

P.S.—*MOTACILLA FLAVA*. “And are therefore of var. *taiwanus*” (Seebohm in *Ibis*, 1884, p. 39). *Budytes taiwanus*, Swinhoe, is the most perfectly distinct of all Wagtails. It differs even structurally, having a longer and stronger bill, also longer and stronger legs and feet. The coloration is unique. If it be not a thoroughly good species, then there is not such a thing as a good species.

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XXVII.—*Remarks on two rare American Oscines.*

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(Plate VII.)

As mentioned in my last article on the Icteridæ (*Ibis*, 1884, p. 167), the authorities of the U.S. National Museum have kindly sent to me for inspection the type of *Idiopsar brachyurus* of Cassin. From the same obliging correspondents Mr. Salvin has obtained the loan of the only two known specimens of *Acanthidops bairdi* of Ridgway. I venture to offer a few remarks upon these two rare and little-known species.

*Idiopsar brachyurus* (Cassin, Pr. Ac. Nat. Sc. Phil. 1866, p. 114) is one of the most singular South-American types I have seen for a long while. Although the wings of the unique specimen are in process of moult, their structure and that of the feet show that it is a nine-primaryed Oscine. But I have much doubt whether it is best referred to the Icteridæ, as Cassin has proposed. The square tail and cast of plumage remind one more of some of the Fringillidæ of the genus *Phrygilus*, especially *Phrygilus unicolor*, which in style of plumage it closely resembles. The bill is certainly *very* abnormal for a Fringilline bird, but hardly more divergent from the ordinary Fringilline structure than that organ is in the case of such types as *Catamblyrhynchus*, *Piezorhina*, and *Xenospingus*. On the other hand I can find no bill among the Icterines nearly similar to that of *Idiopsar*, and in plumage



no species at all resembling it. The only remaining group with which it would be possible to associate *Idiopsar* is the Cœrebidæ. But I can see no satisfactory resting-place for it here. On the whole therefore I should be disposed to place *Idiopsar* among the Fringillidæ, unless it is preferable to make it the type of a separate family.

Mr. Keulemans's drawing (Plate VII.) will, I trust, serve to render this obscure form better known, and perhaps help to induce some one to send us home further specimens. The type was procured in La Paz, Bolivia, by Mr. D. K. Carter.

Of *Acanthidops bairdi*, Ridgway, Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. 1881, p. 336, two specimens are now before me—the original type, from the Volcano of Irazu, Costa Rica, obtained by J. Cooper in 1880, marked “♀,” and a second specimen from the same locality obtained by the same collector in 1883, marked “♂.” The plumage scarcely differs in the two sexes, but the male is rather larger in dimensions. As regards the position of this bird in the series, I trust Mr. Ridgway will excuse me if I venture to differ from him. He has described it very accurately, and I have nothing to add to his characters; but in my opinion the collector, who is stated to have referred it to the Fringillidæ, was correct in so doing.

In the first place the primaries are, I think I may confidently say, nine in number, the outermost being but slightly shorter than the next three following. This at once removes it from the Tracheophones, in which a tenth primary is always present, and shows that it is a nine-primaried Oscine. It is quite true that the division of the anterior face of the tarsus into distinct plates would primarily militate against this position; but the same structure is to be found in other true Oscines (such as *Mimus* and *Thryothorus*), and cannot negative the verdict of the nine primaries. I should therefore propose to place *Acanthidops* near *Chrysomitris* in the family Fringillidæ.